

The Hoover-Wilson Correspondence

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years. When Hoover entered the Harding Cabinet in March, 1921, however, he severed his connection with the technical missions, designating Poland and Rickard as trustees for the remittance funds in his place. William B. Poland resigned in 1922, the same year that the technical mission to Poland came to an end, and the technical mission to Austria ended the following year.⁶⁰ It is to be hoped that the full impact of Hoover's technical missions on the reconstruction of eastern Europe will before long be assessed by historians dealing with that part of the world.

⁶⁰Van Patten, "The European Technical Advisers," I, 312; II, 395.

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Book Reviews

The Hoover-Wilson Correspondence, by Francis William O'Brien.
Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1974. pp. xxvi, 297.

There can be little doubt that Herbert Hoover, even forty years after his departure from the White House, still constitutes one of the greatest mysteries of the American twentieth century. Fortunately, Francis William O'Brien's *The Hoover-Wilson Correspondence* provides historians with a compact collection of primary source materials which shed light on Herbert Hoover and clarify some of the historical confusion and ignorance still surrounding his pre-presidential career. O'Brien has compiled 201 letters written by Hoover to Wilson, and 97 letters from Wilson to Hoover, all of them drafted between September 24, 1914 and November 11, 1918. Brief but effective commentaries composed by Mr. O'Brien accompany the letters and place them into a proper context and perspective.

The letters comprising the book are almost exclusively concerned with the economic and political difficulties Hoover encountered during World War I as he directed the Commission on Belgium Relief and the Food Administration. The letters from Hoover often explicitly detail his opinions, while Wilson's responses are for the most part brief acknowledgements or agree-

ments with Hoover's suggestions. Consequently, the book reveals much more about the political philosophy of Herbert Hoover than it does about Woodrow Wilson. Nevertheless, a clear picture emerges from the ideological mist which the Great Depression has created: Herbert Hoover was by no means a political reactionary who mirrored the interests of the American business community. On the contrary, Hoover, like Wilson, was a classical progressive concerned with preserving social order, guaranteeing corporate profits, and protecting consumer interests. Both men praised the virtues of voluntarism and limited government, but during the war, they also willingly and even urgently created a powerful federal bureaucracy able to control the production and distribution of American agriculture products. Both men were expediently willing to employ voluntarism, free competition, monopolistic restraint of trade, price-fixing or any other tactic necessary to stimulate agricultural production and restrain inflation. From O'Brien's book, Herbert Hoover emerges as an activist, pragmatic federal bureaucrat totally committed to governmental direction of the economy; he is hardly a candidate for praise from conservative, laissez-faire circles. Consequently, *The Hoover-Wilson Correspondence* constitutes a valuable contribution to a growing body of literature on Herbert Hoover.

—James S. Olson

Sam Houston State University

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The Impeachment and Trial of Andrew Johnson, by Michael Les Benedict. New York: W. W. Norton, 1973. 212 pp. \$2.45 paperback.

The view that the attempt to remove Andrew Johnson from office was motivated by narrow and selfish political factors has been so persistent that one is surprised that a book like this one hasn't been published previously. Benedict, assistant professor of history at Ohio State University, argues that Johnson's reconstruction program and especially his "winter offensive" in late 1867 and early 1868 strained the American political and constitutional system to the extent that, "Because Republicans respected

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